

## Town of Machias

Town Office, Suite 1  
P.O. Box 418  
Machias, ME 04654

### Machias Comprehensive Planning Committee Meeting Notes

February 18, 2025 @6PM  
At the Machias Tele-Business Center

Ann-Marie Evans called the meeting to order at 6PM. Also in attendance committee members Aaron Ackley, Sarah Dedmon, James Jackson, Chris Meroff, Carole Porcher, Wendy Schoppee, and Josh Spencer. Board member Julie Barker was not in attendance. Also in attendance was Tora Johnson and Bob Berta (via phone).

The purpose of this meeting was to come up with a strategy around how to engage the community into the comprehensive plan process.

Minutes from the 1/13/2025 meeting were accepted. Josh Spencer 1<sup>st</sup>, Carole Porcher 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Attendees introduced themselves to the new attendees on the committee.

A discussion on what legally do we need to do in reference to recording this proceeding. Just an audio file is not enough. This committee is an advisory board and not subject to the same rules as the Selectboard. **Decision:** After some discussion, **the team decided that we will follow the process of other town boards and produce written notes that, once approved, will be posted on the town website.**

**Open item:** We need someone to sign up for creating meeting minutes going forward. The Selectboard is looking at having a designated person do their meeting minutes. **Action:** Sarah and Carol will speak with the Selectboard to see if we can use the same person to do the notes for our group.

A question came up about how many times we should meet each month. **Decision: we will meet twice a month, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month.**

We talked about whether we need to vote on all decisions. The answer is no; however **we decided that we will take votes on controversial decisions.**

Statement of purpose. What is a comprehensive plan? A comprehensive plan has no regulatory teeth. Comprehensive plans are required by state law. The plan should be reviewed and updated every 12 years. Basically, it captures from a town perspective, where we started, where we are currently, and where we want to go. It serves up goals and recommendations from the community to the Town Manager and the elected Selectboard officials as to the future

of the town. Comprehensive plans are required and used for land use ordinances which Machias does not currently have.

Land use both future and proposed should be contained on a land use map, scoping out the current uses but also the proposed future use locations thus allowing the town some control on where certain types of growth can and should occur.

**Action: AM will send a link out to the group as to where to find the current Machias Comprehensive plan.**

We don't have a planner yet, but once we do (hopefully after the next Selectboard meeting), he/she will act as our guide to updating and building this plan. In addition, she/he will do some of the research and write the document. The team will be responsible to review, edit, comment and also be responsible for reaching out to the community for their ideas.

Discussion on how to engage the community: Need to find ways to engage a broad cross section of the community in these discussions. Committee surveys and multiple public meetings are a given, but we need to be more creative and make use of things like social media, coffee and donut discussion, radio, etc. We need to involve the youth of the town, maybe reaching out to student councils. There is currently a student youth challenge group which is discussing how to change and improve the community. We need to invite them into our discussions.

In order to make Machias a more business-friendly town, we will need to engage all local businesses and the Chamber of Commerce.

What questions do we ask the community? We need to build a framework so that we can determine appropriate questions to ask so that we can correlate all the data into something we can articulate and use. We have lots of groups to seek out, youth, elderly, veterans, long term residents, new residents, retired folks, working folks, fisherman, the list is long.

In order to come up with questions for the community we decided we needed to understand where the current Selectboard vision is for the town. We decided to use the current comprehensive plan chapter listing with some additions as a starting point.

**Action: AM will send this listing to the SelectBoard and ask them to prioritize them based on their thoughts and passions. In addition, AM will ask the SelectBoard to add us to the agenda to specifically discuss with us their vision for the towns Population, Economy and Housing needs.** Three of the important chapters of the Plan. The intent is to continue these discussions on the various chapters at each and every Selectboard meeting until we have covered all the chapters of the plan. This information should help us understand the current vision and help us craft the appropriate questions to ask the community.

Chapters	Priority
History	
Population	
Natural Resources	

Economy	
Housing	
Recreation	
Transportation	
Public Facilities	
Fiscal Capacity	
Land Use	
Healthcare (physical/mental)	
Resiliency	
Regional Coordination	
Aging (including nursing homes)	
Youth	
Substance Use	

It is important, since Machias is a Shiretown, to solicit input from surrounding towns. We will solicit feedback from them. This will be a future discussion.

When do we meet next? **Monday, March 3<sup>th</sup> at 6PM in the temporary Town Office.**  
**We also decided to meet on Monday, March 17<sup>th</sup>.**

Meeting ended at 7PM with a vote. Josh Spencer 1<sup>st</sup>, Carole Porcher 2<sup>nd</sup>.